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The Good Neighbor



AFTER HOURS By John Morley

Columnist Gets Personal Look at Viet Nam Strife

SAIGON VIET NAM — In the past few days I covered the fighting areas between the Vietnamese forces, assisted by U. S. . . . and the Viet Cong (Communist), assisted by Red China. It's all guerrilla war . . . fought in swamps, dense forests, mountains and on the banks of rivers and streams infested with insects and reptiles.

Viet Nam is becoming another Korea in spite of the optimistic reports brought back to the U. S. by Secretary of Defense McNamara and Chief of Staff General Taylor.

I cannot for the life of me understand how they could bring such hopeful reports to Washington. The military here, both U. S. and Viet Nam . . . including the Vietnamese officials, tell me that either the U. S. generals here misinformed President Johnson's emissaries . . . or the administration is withholding the painful facts for political reasons.

I have talked privately with U. S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge (who, incidentally, told me he is not a presidential candidate), Viet Nam Prime Minister Nguyen Ngo-Tho, chief of state; General Duong Van Minh, leader of the November revolution that eliminated President Diem.

I covered the conference between the opposing religious leaders, Bishop Piquet representing Catholicism, and Buddhist Thich Chang Ngu, in remote and hostile Binh Tuy, some 200 miles north of Saigon.

I also talked with old friends here in business, education, reporters and officials of U. S. agencies. I discussed the situation with Rotarian friends after my address to the Saigon Rotary club.

Here is the gist of my conclusions having covered this unfortunate country before and during the defeat of the French by Communist Ho Chin Min at Dien Bienfu, from 1950 to the present:

Most people in the United States have been ignoring the warnings of the correspondents here . . . and accepting the administration's optimistic pronouncements.

For example, during the then Vice president Johnson's three-day visit to Viet Nam last year, he referred to the late President Diem as "the savior of South East Asia" and convinced President Kennedy to increase our aid. Shortly afterward we withdrew much of this aid and actually encouraged the revolution that later murdered him.

I listened to a tape recording of the revolution in the home of my friend, Tom Bready, manager of Pan American in Saigon, by John Kendrick of Page Radio communications. It was an eye-opener, revealing a n g e r s and lack of communications that plagued the U. S. nationals here.

One top U. S. official, who obviously asked not to be quoted, put it to me thusly: "Never has America given so much, excepted so little . . . and got a lot less."

I saw part of the seven tons of captured Chinese Communist-made guns and ammunition in a Viet Nam Army base, the result of less than a week-old drive against the Viet Cong. This confirmed Red China's Premier Chou En-Lai's statement to me in Cairo . . . "that China is giving

all-out military aid to all who fight the imperialists." Several U. S. helicopters were shot down with Red Chinese guns in the area I covered, bringing the total of U. S. losses to 160 dead and several hundred wounded to date. A U. S. Marine helicopter was downed by Communist guerrillas, while on a medical mission in Quan Nam province today.

My conclusions here on the spot in Saigon are as follows:

- The U. S. has blood on its hands in the murder of President Diem. We could have prevented it, but didn't.
- The Viet Nam nightmare will get worse, because the Communists are better organized for guerrilla warfare and can afford to fight indefinitely, while we're not.
- Relations between the U. S. and the Viet Nam Military

council are lukewarm. We support the "hamlet" program (fortified villages) while the Vietnamese are against it.

• Under Diem, the Catholics (about 5 per cent of the population) had the upper hand . . . but now under Buddhist leadership of Premier Tho and General Minh (50 per cent of population), the Catholics are out of influence. This means religious trouble.

• President Johnson is unwilling to commit more U. S. force in fear of political repercussions. We're fighting a major war piecemeal, far worse than Korea. At a small village at the front I saw the most hopeful indication of U. S. respect in a sign which read: "We would like to cover President Kennedy's grave with flowers . . . and all the tears in Viet Nam."

Our Man Hoppe

The New Breed In Astronauts

—Art Hoppe

Good morning, gentlemen. At ease. Congratulations on your selection as Cadet Astronauts and welcome to our new Aerospace School here at Boca Raton. We can only hope the revised training program we are inaugurating today will meet the fast-changing needs of the modern Astronaut.

As school commandant, it is my duty this morning to outline briefly this rigorous new training program you face. Let's not mince words. It will be tough, arduous, and grueling. Some of you will wash out. Some of you will throw in the sponge. But just remember when the going gets rough that the whole future of our space effort rests squarely on your shoulders. We are, men, counting on you.

So let's take a look at the schedule you will follow in the days ahead. And a man-killing one it is.

0800-0845: ROMANCE LANGUAGES. This will be a dally drill, men, in such phrases as "A-Okay" and "all systems go." I need not warn you that any slips such as "peachy" or "jim-dandy" will mean instant dismissal from the program.

0845-0950: PUBLIC SPEAKING. Elementary luncheon talks to Kiwanis or Rotary on up to the major addresses. The second half of the course involves advanced techniques such as the Modest Joke, The Grin, The Sincere Gesture, and the Spiritual Frown.

0950-1155: PRESS RELATIONS. This course includes Fielding Hot Questions, Interviews in Depth, and Television Panel Shows. Negotiating Magazine Contracts, however, will come under General Accounting, along with Motel Operating, How to Incorporate, and You & Your Income Tax.

1155-1800: SHAPING UP. Here is the crux of the program. It will be during these long afternoons, men, that we will make modern Astronauts out of you. Make no mistake. Each of you has basic defects which can be corrected only by painstaking work. You, Caswell! That mole on your cheek must go. And, Blake,, there is no room for sideburns under an Astronaut's helmet. As for you, Woltcheski . . . Well, a name like that might go over well in some districts of Illinois. But nationally?

In addition, each Monday from 1300 to 1315 you will be required to take instruction on The Space Capsule & How to Operate It. I realize this may seem an unreasonable burden in view of your heavy work load. But believe me, men, the very first step to success in your chosen career is a space flight. The public demands it.

And some of you will succeed. Some of you will follow successfully in the footsteps of those inadequately-trained earlier Astronauts who even today are striving to blaze a pioneer trail in their rickety old PR programs. Yes, thanks to their daring example, you will not fail. Some day you will stand at last on the alien soil of that pinnacle which is your goal: Capitol Hill.

And when you do, remember to ask for a seat on the Appropriations Committee. As I say, men, all of us in the space effort are counting on you.

Morning Report:

Everybody wants to know which way the Johnson Administration will go. And I think I know. Both ways—and at the same time.

Perle Mesta, a Nixon supporter, was invited to the White House after being unable to wangle an invitation from the Kennedys in three years. But Bobby Kennedy went off on a big foreign mission for the President. LBJ had a Southern Senator up to Camp David for the weekend and Negro civil rights leaders in at the White House. He's going to abolish poverty and cut the budget. He praises President Roosevelt and gets advice from General Eisenhower.

You can see why the Republicans are a little dizzy. The President has 'em surrounded.

Abe Mellinkoff

'Yes' for Schools

Tuesday is D-Day again for the Torrance Unified School District.

On that day the city's 40,000-plus voters will be asked to decide whether they think the city's school system is worth another 40 cents on their tax rate for the next 5 years.

It is probably unfortunate that taxpayers are asked to cast their ballots only on the funds to educate our children. The balloting could well be transferred to other fields of taxation, in the minds of many.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that a legal ceiling has been placed on the tax rate which can be levied to support public schools in California, and that tax rate just does not provide the funds needed to operate a school system such as that which has been developed in Torrance during the past 15 years.

The Board of Education, after long discussion and study of the financing problem they would face after the currently collected 50-cent override tax ends this year, agreed that they needed the 50-cent rate to continue and would need still additional funds.

Some thought another 25 cents would be sufficient, others thought more would be needed, and the board finally settled on another 40 cents, bringing the total of the override issue on the ballot next Tuesday to 90 cents. It would be 40 cents higher than the currently collected rate, if approved. If it fails, the rate would drop 50 cents.

The HERALD has heard complaints that the schools are not as economy-oriented as they should be, and some support for those complaints probably can be found.

The over-all operation of the school system, however, is as economical as any in the county according to massive statistical data compiled by agencies outside of the district.

This fact and others which add to the plus side of the ballot argument led The HERALD to reaffirm its early endorsement of the override proposal and recommend that the voters mark their ballots with a "Yes" on Tuesday.

It's never easy to vote more taxes on an already overburdened taxpayer, but as the school officials are saying repeatedly, "How can you vote against the kids?"

One Hazard Too Many

Because 213th Street between Western Avenue and Cabrillo Avenue is one of the more miserable of the city's miserable entrances, it is avoided in large numbers by motorists seeking to find a way into the downtown area.

Some people have found it, however, and rock along its bumpy way, over the bumpy railroad track, and through the maze of islands, stripes, and channel markers which usher one—usually the wrong way—into the downtown Torrance area.

That is, people have so far. What is going to happen some night when a motorist tools up the slope to the unlighted railroad crossing and fails to notice the threat of danger ahead in the form of a parked train because he can see right under it, observing lights and traffic of the city ahead?

It nearly happened to one Torrance businessman recently and undoubtedly has happened to many another motorist. It has been described as a dangerous crossing, and cursory checks of the area indicate that the description is at least fitting.

The matter of responsibility is a clouded one in the minds of laymen. We recommend, however, that the appropriate city official make a check and if the danger of this crossing—day or night—is as eminent as it appears, the proper steps be taken to correct the situation.

And on the subject of such crossings, known familiarly as "flag crossings," there are others in town with equally deficient protection. Take those along Sartori Avenue, the one at Torrance Boulevard and Madrona, and at Carson Street and Madrona.

The normal hazards of driving in a metropolitan area are enough without compounding those hazards with unlighted, unprotected, or dangerously designed railroad crossings.

Some work should be done in reducing this hazard.

ROYCE BRIER

A Melancholy Recounting Of American Leadership

Approaching 1890, the United States became the leading manufacturing nation of the world. It paid off in the Spanish-American War, which astonished and puzzled the Europeans. The full impact of our production potential did not reach the Europeans until the 1914 war.

At the close we were the most powerful nation on earth. But we fumbled our leadership, did not really want it, and the Europeans were quick to take advantage of the fumble.

When lo! the same process was repeated in the 1940s, and more forcefully. Only we could resolve the European mess, while at the same time resolving the Far Eastern mess, because we had to. This left us supreme, and even the Russians were never able to overtake us. We didn't like it.

Large segments of our people had an active repugnance to it. But we had to go on, reorganizing everything, rehabilitating half of mankind.

The Russians of course organized against us, threatened, obstructed and conspired, gave us a rat-race in nuclear-missile power, as well as in world economy. The West European hegemony, recovering its balance and motion, began to feel the honeymoon was over.

The decline of our leadership has now been going on for some years. President de Gaulle is a foremost exponent of it, but it appears in many forms, for example in our changing relations with Japan and Britain. We ourselves have connived in it by diminishing foreign aid, but more importantly in our thinking about the world. Even President Kennedy's idealism

FROM the MAILBOX

The Tax: Pro and Con

The coming decision on school finance in Torrance is an investment in our children. The override is not for the benefit of the board, the administration or anyone but the children who attend school.

It represents a forty-cent increase plus maintaining the present rate. It has to appear on the ballot as a ninety-cent increase because the tax has to begin from the point to which the tax rate will drop if the issue fails. Due to the three-year time limit on the last fifty-cent increase in rate, it will not continue.

A very conscientious board of education spent months arriving at the amount of increase and took into consideration the fact that there is a good chance of more state funds within five years. Otherwise the board would have to ask for more. The board does not like taxes any better than you and I do—but it does feel the obligation to give you the opportunity to support good schools if you want to. The board members are your elected representatives, and they are doing the best they know how to help you solve this problem. Were you each saddled with this responsibility and in possession of all the facts studied by your board you would have come to the same conclusions. They have studied it longer and harder than anyone else in the community.

If the election does not pass, the result will be felt through more children in the classrooms and fewer teachers to teach them. The result of such a heavy load will cause teachers to be recep-

tive to offers from other districts where they do not have to teach so many children. It is very difficult to say "good-bye" to your best teachers, to take the leftover, and try to keep up a quality program, with less funds.

Even if the state does help some, the forty cents is only going to hold the present level with all the children from all the new dwelling units added to the problem.

Next year isn't going to look very bright, even with the forty-cent increase, because the county assessor tells us we will have a loss of \$12,000,000 in assessed valuation.

Your serious consideration for a favorable vote is very important to all the 30,500 children in the Torrance Schools. Even though this is the only tax you have a say in determining, don't take it out on your children or your grandchildren.

J. H. HULL, Secretary Board of Education

Editor, Torrance Herald
I am unequivocally opposed to the Torrance Unified School District's request for a tax override.

I accuse the School Board, the City Council and myself, as a voter, of a complacency that has permitted the continuance of an intolerable, self-indulgent bureaucracy, and the alleged need for a tax override.

It is regrettable that the children of Torrance are being used as pawns in a million-dollar grab-bag game involving the School Board, City Council, Planning Commission and land speculators. To approve the tax override would be to condone the absurd lack of coordination, conspicuous by its absence, between the School Board and the City Council during the past several years.

I must vote "no" on a tax measure that endorses an apparent lack of ability on the part of the school administration to adequately budget available funds.

The head of a household or a businessman would be described as a poor manager if he permitted his expenses to exceed his income. The school administration is re-

his transportation is collapsing.

All this we accept with mixed feeling. Some Americans are glad, some are sad, and many are perplexed by our loss of momentum and prestige, whatever that is.

You may be sure it was inevitable, and it may well be good. Great human turmoil like war and dissolution are charged with emotion. Everybody is a little crazed. But reality must return. History prefers it, and does not take kindly to universal leadership, whether reluctant like the American or eager like the Roman. One of the wisest of Abraham Lincoln's sayings was that we cannot escape history.

sorting to emotional appeals, "flag-waving" tactics, and slanted statistics to win support for the tax override. It is my fervent prayer that the same administration will some day apply the same degree of effort toward an efficient and effective management of school finances.

One can easily draw a parallel between the statement that the children of Torrance are being adequately educated, at the expense of placing a "millstone" of taxes around their future collective necks, with the expression "the operation was a success, but the patient died."

I made many of these same statements as an unsuccessful candidate for the School Board last year, and predicted that an increase in taxes would be required if remedial action was not immediately instituted. My opposition disagreed.

My conscience will not permit me to remain silent on the issue.

JOSEPH PIATT
3212 Antonio St.

Editor, Torrance Herald

We wish to inform you that at a recent association meeting our unit voted as favoring the proposed 90-cent increase in the Maximum Tax Rate for the Torrance Unified School District. Also the Torrance Council of Parent-Teacher Assn., Inc. has gone on record as supporting this increase.

We believe that by becoming informed you will see the necessity of voting to increase the Maximum Tax Rate from \$2.40 to \$3.30.

Therefore, we earnestly urge you to editorially support passage of this proposed increase.

Towers Elementary PTA
W. H. PACE, President

Editor, Torrance Herald

The Torrance Board of Education stands united behind the need for additional operating funds unless we are to cut the quality of education offered in the schools.

BERT M. LYNN, President
KURT T. SHERY, Vice President
A. W. CHARLES
W. J. HANSON
PAULINE WATTS

Opinions of Others

TERRE HAUTE, IND., TRIBUNE: "There was a time in centuries past when the church owned much of the best lands in Europe. Although the ownership pattern changed after the Reformation, some churchmen are beginning to wonder if the pendulum is not swinging back the other way in this country. One prominent clergyman who has expressed his concern about this is Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, the nation's top Presbyterian official. He recently said, with a touch of sarcasm: that is not as far-fetched as one might think, that 'churches ought to be able, with prudent management, to control the American economy within the predictable future.' This was his way of underlining the extreme distaste he feels—a distaste shared by more than a few other religious leaders—for the trend toward church ownership of property and money-making ventures."